(vii) A meeting-cum workshop on Biological & Chemical Terrorism was convened by the Department of Health on 29th October, 2001 in New Delhi wherein Health Secretary, Home Secretary and Director of Health Services from various States/UTs eminent experts in the field of medical science from different organizations in the country and heads of different hospitals in Govt. and private sector in Delhi participated and deliberated on various aspects. The representatives from the States informed the preparatory measures taken by them and assured availability of drugs in adequate quantity to tackle any situation.

(viii) Continuing Medical Education activities are being conducted in the Central Govt. hospitals in Delhi to sensitise the medical and paramedical personnel on biological terrorism.

(ix) The situation is being monitored.

Import of Ajinomoto

1390. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Monosodium Glutamate (Ajinomoto) a taste enhancer is considered as a health hazard by US Federal Drug Administration and other European countries;

(b) whether Government still import and use a large quantity of Ajinomoto;

(c) whether Government had earlier contemplated banning the import/use Monoisodium Glutamate; and

(d) if so, why the proposal was shelved?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. P. THAKUR): (a) Monosodium Glutamate, a flavour enhancer is considered as a Safe Food additive by the Joint Expert Committee on Food Addditives of FAO/ WHO food standard programme.

(b) Government does not import or use Ajinomoto. But the import of Ajinomoto is free.

(c) and (d) According to Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce, the import of Monosodium Glutamate (Ajinomoto) is free and there was no proposal to ban the import during the last year.

The use of Monosodium Glutamate in foods is regulated by the provisions of Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955, according to which it may be

added to an article of food under proper lebel declaration provided the total glutamate content of ready to serve food does not exceed 1 percent. It shall not be added to any food for use by infant below twelve months.

Maintenance of Quality Standards by Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes

1391. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are many private hospitals and nursing homes in the country which do not conform to the minimum infrastructure and quality standards;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether his ministry is planning to envisage some strict regulatory legislations to correct the situation; and

(d) if so, by when such legislation and other administrative measures are going to be initiated?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) to (d) Health is a State subject under the Constitution of India and it is the responsibility of respective State/Union Territory to frame rules/ guidelines in respect of minimum infrastructure and quality standards in private hospitals and nursing homes situated in the State/Union Territory. However, there is a proposal in Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to have a legislation prescribing the minimum standards for hospitals, nursing homes and other clinical establishments in the country in view of the large scale proliferation of private clinic/nursing homes all over the country and complaints received from time to time about the quality of service provided by them. 'Health' being a State subject, proposed legislation requires the consent of two or more States. All the State Governments have been requested to consider the proposal and take necessary steps to make available the recommendations of the State Legislatures in this regard.

Supply of standard medicines to rural health centres

1392. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated an integrated programme to provide standard medicines to all the rural health centres and other health institutions;